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A27WX

(500) PMS BUDGET (WITH WIREPHOTO WX2)
 PERSONALITY IN THE NEWS: KOMER
 BY FRANCES LEWINE
 ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON, MARCH 23 (AP)—AFTER A LONG CAREER IN THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, ROBERT W. KOMER PREFERS TO BE "ONE OF THOSE FACELESS MEN WHO ANONYMOUSLY SERVE THE PRESIDENT."

YESTERDAY, THOUGH, PRESIDENT JOHNSON RAISED HIM TO A \$30,000-A-YEAR SPOTLIGHTED WHITE HOUSE JOB AND GAVE HIM THE TITLE:

"SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR PEACEFUL RECONSTRUCTION IN VIET NAM."

KOMER HAD NO DIRECT COMMENT, BUT HIS WIFE CONFIDED "HE'S VERY EXCITED."

BY NEXT TUESDAY THE 44-YEAR-OLD KOMER, AN ATHLETIC SIX-FOOTER WHO WAS A HARVARD PHI BETA KAPP, WILL BE OFF ON HIS FIRST RECONNOITERING MISSION TO VIET NAM.

HIS FLUENCY IN FRENCH IS AMONG HIS ASSETS FOR WHAT JOHNSON CHARACTERIZED AS A "NEW AND VERY RESPONSIBLE ASSIGNMENT" INVOLVING THE ECONOMIC FUTURE OF SOUTH VIET NAM.

KOMER HAS BEEN A SPECIALIST IN MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICAN--AS WELL AS SOUTH ASIAN--AFFAIRS AND HAS WORKED CLOSELY IN THE FOREIGN AID PROGRAM.

CPYRGHT

A28WX

A SERIOUS, INTENSE BEHIND-THE-SCENES MAN WITH 14 YEARS IN THE SUPER-SECRET CIA, KOMER CAME TO THE WHITE HOUSE EARLY IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY AS A LIAISON MAN AND STAFF ASSISTANT FOR THE HIGH-LEVEL NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL (NSC). LATER, HE SERVED AS DEPUTY TO MCGEORGE BUNDY, SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS TO BOTH KENNEDY AND JOHNSON.

NOW, WITH BUNDY GONE, PRESIDENT JOHNSON IS REORGANIZING THIS AREA OF HIS STAFF, AND KOMER HAS COME TO THE FORE.

A NATIVE OF CHICAGO, HE GOT HIS START IN THE INTELLIGENCE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT WHEN HE TRAINED AT THE ARMY COMBAT INTELLIGENCE SCHOOL IN WORLD WAR II AND SERVED WITH ARMY INTELLIGENCE IN ITALY.

HE WENT TO WORK FOR THE CIA IN 1947, RIGHT AFTER EARNING HIS MASTER'S DEGREE AT HARVARD'S GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION.

KOMER RECALLS HE "FIRST CAME TO THE ATTENTION" OF JOHNSON WHEN HE WAS ASSIGNED BY KENNEDY TO ACCOMPANY THE THEN VICE PRESIDENT ON A MIDDLE EAST TRIP IN 1962. AMONG KOMER'S DUTIES WERE BRIEFINGS FOR JOHNSON AND HIS STAFF AND HELPING TO WRITE SPEECHES THE VICE PRESIDENT DELIVERED ALONG THE WAY.

KNOWN AS "ROB" TO CLOSE FRIENDS, KOMER LIVES IN LAKE BARCROFT IN NEARBY VIRGINIA, WITH HIS ATTRACTIVE AND TALENTED WIFE, THE FORMER GERALDINE PEPLIN OF CLEVELAND, AND CHILDREN BY A FORMER MARRIAGE, DOUGLAS, 16; RICHARD, 14 AND ANNE, 12.

LAKE BARCROFT PROVIDES KOMER WITH READY ACCESS TO HIS FAVORITE HOBBIES--SWIMMING, TENNIS, SAILING AND ICE SKATING. HE AND HIS WIFE TRY TO GET IN A SWIM DAILY BEFORE WORK WHEN THE WEATHER IS WARM.

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CPYRGHT

A29 WX

MRS. KOMER, WHOM HE MARRIED NOV. 3, 1961, IS THE DAUGHTER OF A CLEVELAND MANUFACTURER. SHE STUDIED VOICE AT EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC, ROCHESTER, N.Y., AND FOR A WHILE WAS A PROFESSIONAL SINGER IN LIGHT OPERA AND MUSICAL SHOWS.

IT WAS WHILE SHE WAS ON THE JOB AS SOCIAL DIRECTOR AT A MIAMI BEACH HOTEL IN 1960 THAT SHE MET KOMER IN THE SWIMMING POOL.

SHE SHARES HER HUSBAND'S INTEREST IN COOKING, BUT HE'S THE REAL GOURMET CHEF OF THE FAMILY--WITH A PENCHANT FOR HIGHLY SEASONED FOODS AND A GREAT LOVE OF CHINESE DELICACIES, INCLUDING PEKING DUCK.

WHEN HE HAS TIME, HE PERFORMS IN THE KITCHEN. "BUT NOWADAYS, HIS WIFE LAMENTS WITH A LAUGH, "HE JUST HAS TIME TO EAT."

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23 March 1966

DEVELOPMENT 3/23 NX
DAY LD

BY JED STOUT

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

WASHINGTON (UPI)--PRESIDENT JOHNSON HAS ORDERED TWO OF HIS CLOSEST AIDES INTO SOUTHEAST ASIA IN HIS DETERMINED EFFORT TO RECONSTRUCT WAR-WRACKED SOUTH VIET NAM.

WHITE HOUSE AIDE ROBERT KOMER, 44, NAMED A SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT TUESDAY, AND PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY BILL D. MOYERS WILL LEAVE TUESDAY, ACCOMPANYING DEPUTY DEFENSE SECRETARY CYRUS R. VANCE.

THE ASSIGNMENT OF THE TWO TOP AIDES WAS SEEN AS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF JOHNSON'S DESIRE TO KEEP CLOSE TABS ON THE VIET NAM DEVELOPMENT EFFORT. IT FOLLOWS VISITS BY OTHER HIGH ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN RECONSTRUCTION PLANS.

JOHNSON SAID THE TRIP WOULD GIVE MOYERS AND KOMER AN "ON-THE-GROUND PICTURE" OF THE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS OF SOUTH VIET NAM.

KOMER'S JOB, ONCE HE RETURNS TO WASHINGTON, WILL BE HELPING JOHNSON "SEE THAT THESE PEOPLE GET WHAT THEY NEED IN THAT PARTICULAR FIELD," THE PRESIDENT SAID.

"WE HAVE THE BEST EXPERTS AVAILABLE IN THIS COUNTRY INVOLVED IN STUDYING THE PEACEFUL CONSTRUCTION OF VIET NAM, THEIR EDUCATION AND HEALTH PROBLEMS, PRODUCTIVITY PROBLEMS AND AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS," JOHNSON SAID.

JOHNSON SAID KOMER WOULD BE A COORDINATOR OF THE "EXPERTISE AND KNOWLEDGE TO HELP THESE PEOPLE HELP THEMSELVES AND HAVE A BETTER WAY OF LIFE."

KOMER HAS ALREADY SPENT TIME WITH SECRETARY OF STATE DEAN RUSK, DEFENSE SECRETARY ROBERT MCNAMARA AND MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN AID STAFF IN PREPARATION FOR HIS NEW ASSIGNMENT, JOHNSON SAID.

HE WILL WORK VERY CLOSELY WITH SECRETARY RUSK, SECRETARY MCNAMARA, FOREIGN AID OFFICIALS AND THE UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY, JOHNSON SAID. KOMER WILL NO LONGER HAVE DUTIES WITH THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL.

"I THINK HE WILL HAVE HIS HANDS PRETTY FULL..." WITH THE NEW JOB, THE PRESIDENT SAID. "WE ARE GOING TO CALL HIM...SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR PEACEFUL RECONSTRUCTION IN VIET NAM."

KOMER'S PREVIOUS ASSIGNMENT WAS AS DEPUTY TO MCGEORGE BUNDY, JOHNSON'S SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS UNTIL HIS RESIGNATION LAST MONTH.

A NATIVE OF CHICAGO, KOMER IS A PHI BETA KAPPA GRADUATE OF HARVARD AND HOLDS A DEGREE FROM THE HARVARD SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION.

DURING WORLD WAR II HE WON THE BRONZE STAR AS A FIRST LIEUTENANT IN EUROPE. FROM 1947 TO 1961, WHEN HE JOINED BUNDY, HE WORKED FOR THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY. THE NEW JOB PAYS \$30,000 A YEAR.

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